

Essays and Contributions.

SOME OPINIONS RELATIVE TO SCHOOLS.

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From all that I can gather there has been quite a diversity of opinion among the brethren with regard to a church school, its relations to the church, the various courses composing its curriculum the length of these and the extent of each and the best plans for the successful carrying out of the same, etc., etc. The topics here enumerated may not be touched, very decisively, in this article, but rather the "*et cetera*" will be more fully noticed. The intent of the article is to call forth criticism, and thus arrive at some different conclusion, perhaps by calling forth and presenting other phases of this neglected, though important subject. I shall simply give a few of my own opinions, with regard to the character of a school, that I think, the church should try to maintain, leaving the minutia of details for delineation by the CHURCH or BOARD of TRUSTEES. I sincerely trust too that these few thoughts may call forth a full discussion of this matter, even if the effort here, should in the future, be proven worthless by minds that are higher and are better adapted by culture to the task than that of your humble servant.

The prime essential for our consideration is not only that we must maintain an academy, a college, or a university, but if any one of these, what shall be its character? Why shall it be an academy, a college or a university? This brings us to another important point for our serious consideration, in aiding us to ascertain what character and why a college, or otherwise. Here I shall state a proposition that most of those who are familiar with the historic past would accept as a postulate; viz: that seventy-five to one hundred years ago a primary or secondary school, such as now compose the parochial schools of the state of Ohio, would then have served our ends far better than any semi-equipped, semi-managed, sham-university of today could possibly do. (No reflections are here intended as the writer is as ignorant of our past collegiate doings

as of Volapuk having never inquired into or studied either.)

Without speculating upon the probable number that might concede the foregoing proposition, as true, we shall proceed to the consideration of the character of our school and the *why* it should be so.

This brings us to the consideration of the *why* (?) By comparing the environments of those who sought to establish schools three quarters of a century ago to our surroundings at present a vast difference, perhaps incomparable, at once becomes very obvious, since the past as referred to here can be only slight importance in deciding the point at issue, I shall leave the reader to picture and compare, if it will admit of comparison, to the surroundings with which we must battle today.

All churches throughout Christendom have this educational center, or centers, some having only one, and others composed of many *nuclei* having their corresponding *nucleoli*. The BRETHREN CHURCH has decided on Ashland as their educational center, or *nucleolus* around which the *neucleus*, whether large or small must be grown, and to which all our minds should turn for culture, instruction, and the getting of knowledge, and understanding (?) It should become the one great center where all our available cash for literary ends should be invested—where all our collegiate material, and energies should concentrate, to the up-building of an institution that may stand as a living monument, to our intellect, frugality, industry and tact—a place where the purely spiritual and intellectual blend to form a harmonious unit, that may ever redound to the glory of God through Christ.

Again to ascertain the characteristics of our school let us revert to the environments which beset us and as our Master said to his apostles with regard to the king, let us, 'consult whether we be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against us with twenty thousand.'

Let us now "*consult*"—Ashland is situated in north central Ohio, a state that while it does not stand first in educational rank, it is unquestionably

among the leading states thus considered, as we shall find upon a strict investigation. The data here adduced, is from the U. S. Educational Report for 1889-1890, by the Hon. W. T. Harris. L. L. D., Commissioner of Education.

In 1890 Ohio had six Normal Schools, thirty-one Universities and Colleges, and twenty Business Colleges, with a total attendance, for all the schools, of over sixteen thousands students. The fifty institutions here mentioned does not include the private secondary schools, nor schools of art, music, science, etc. etc., as schools *per se*. The institutions here considered are all more or less self-sustaining, and represent millions of money, many are heavily endowed, too, there being in the thirty-seven colleges and universities forty-one endowed professor-ships, eight of those are in an institution distant less than seventy-five miles from Ashland.

Some of these schools are presided over by faculties of as bright a talents as can be found in America, and from the walls of the same institutions have issued men and women who are representative of as great intellectual achievements as any under the sun, considered from a literary stand-point.

With environments composed of such unprecedented educational facilities as are here presented, hedged in with competition of the sharpest character, have we not something with which to compete? When we consider the true character of these schools, the advantages offered in the way of gratuitous tuition, free-scholarships, etc. etc.—the question as to the kind of a school we need and the *why* we need it is abundantly answered from sheer necessity,—a first class school, being the answer. One that shall be no more pretense at a school, but one that will bear the light of investigation—one that lives up to its announcement every year—one that will grow from its own intrinsic worth—one equipped with a spirit of progression as opposed to retrogression—one that is not ashamed of its work as represented by the students sent out—one whose certificate or diploma shall represent in the person who owns it an equivalent of its face value.

I must here note that our school has